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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MTA RESUMES EXCAVATION OF HOLLYWOOD SOUTH TUNNEL;
NORTH TUNNEL MACHINE PAUSED WEST OF ORANGE DRIVE**

The MTA's tunneling contractor today resumed excavation of the Metro Rail south tunnel beneath Hollywood Boulevard. Meanwhile, the machine excavating the north tunnel has advanced 828 feet since tunneling resumed Jan. 7 to a point west of Orange Drive. Tunneling in the north tunnel has been temporarily halted.

"The contractor hopes to make up for lost time by restarting the south tunnel now, instead of waiting for the north tunneling machine to reach the mountains," said Charles Stark, MTA Segment 2 and 3 project manager.

He noted that for the next several weeks, work crews in the north tunnel will install steel struts in a 1,500-foot section of tunnel between Whitley and Orchid Avenues.

"Under our agreement with the city, we will replace wood wedges with steel struts," Stark said. "During that time, the north tunnel machine will be stopped, but will resume simultaneous excavation with the south tunnel machine when the strut installation is complete."

Work in the north tunneling machine has progressed to west of Orchid Drive, past Mann's Chinese Theater. The south tunneling machine is currently west of Whitley Avenue. Work at the surface has included chemical grouting in front of the Chinese Theater and in the intersections of Hollywood Boulevard with Cherokee and Las Palmas Avenues.

Excavation in the north tunnel has averaged about 50 feet a day since Jan. 7 when tunneling resumed. Work had been halted since Aug. 18, 1994, in order to strengthen portions of the north tunnel.

(MORE)

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Surveyors are monitoring the surface to determine any subsidence experienced at street level. According to MTA policy, excavation would be stopped if there is more than 3/4 of an inch of subsidence ahead of the machine and 1 1/2 inches behind the machine. Thus far, settlement has been significantly less than that.

The Metro Red Line Segment 2 tunnels, from Wilshire Boulevard to Hollywood and Vine, are scheduled to open in 1998. Segment 3, which will reach under the Santa Monica Mountains and includes stations at Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and North Hollywood, is to open in 2000.

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